

**Testimony of Victoria Veltri
State Healthcare Advocate
Before the Public Health Committee
In Re SB 368
March 16, 2012**

Good morning, Representative Ritter, Senator Gerratana, Senator Welch, Representative Perillo, and members of Public Health Committee. For the record, I am Vicki Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate with the Office Healthcare Advocate ("OHA"). OHA is an independent state agency with a three-fold mission: assuring managed care consumers have access to medically necessary healthcare; educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities under health insurance plans; and, informing you of problems consumers are facing in accessing care and proposing solutions to those problems.

As the Health Information Technology Exchange of Connecticut continues to develop the framework for healthcare reform in Connecticut, consideration of the privacy and safety of patient's medical records must remain paramount. Given the implicit risks when medical records become accessible to third parties, appropriate contemplation of this issue must involve elements of consent and access. In addition to the concepts touched upon by this proposed bill, it is important to consider the consequences of this risk. HITE-CT must focus not only on the security of a patient's records, but also notice to the patient when those records have been accessed and appropriate protocols for detecting breaches. Patients risk substantial exposure and abuse of personal and financial data when their records are inappropriately accessed, with potentially serious

consequences.

Another critical consideration involves the preservation of the integrity of mental health, substance abuse and HIV records, and the identification of protocols to safeguard this particularly sensitive information even more zealously, given the personal and social impact that improper access may cause.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to deliver OHA's testimony today. If you have any questions concerning my testimony, please feel free to contact me at victoria.veltri@ct.gov.